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**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 11, 2008

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**HARLEY RIDERS TO CONTINUE TRADITION OF MAKING CHRISTMAS SPECIAL
FOR ADOLESCENTS AT BRYCE**

MONTGOMERY – For the fifth year in a row, members of the Heart of Dixie Harley Owners Group will make Christmas a little brighter for adolescents at the Bryce Adolescent Facility in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. On Saturday, December 13, 2008, a large caravan of Harley-Davidson motorcyclists will leave the Heart of Dixie Harley Dealership at 10 a.m. and enter the gates of Bryce Hospital at approximately 11 a.m. to bring visit with the residents and bring them gifts they have collected and wrapped.

The Harley Owners Group has again chosen the “Bryce Ride” as one of their primary charity rides of the year. Cassie Hall, a member of the group, states exactly why this ride is so important saying, “We look forward to doing this every year because we do not want any child to not feel wanted during the holidays. Every child should get that special feeling from that moment of getting gifts on Christmas morning. We want them to know that there are people who care about them and want their Christmas Day to be important and not forgotten.”

In order to make this a warm Christmas for some of the most seriously ill youth in Alabama, the ride is a partnership between The Alabama Department of Mental Health & Mental Retardation’s mental illness division, JBS Mental Health in Birmingham, and the Heart of Dixie Harley Owners Group. The Bryce Adolescent Facility is a state-of-the-art youth residential unit with classrooms and certified teachers that enable students to continue their education while in treatment. The facility is a 20-bed unit, with the capacity to serve ten males and ten females ranging from age 13 to 18. Currently, there are approximately 20 residents.

Kim Hammack, Coordinator of Child and Adolescent Services at the Department, and coordinator of the event says, “Words will never be able to express how important this annual tradition has become to the adolescents at Bryce. We all get busy in the season by preparing for our own kids and our special Christmas Day. It is heartbreaking to think there are kids with mental illness who can not be at home during the holidays. This giving selflessly lets them know they are special, wanted, and cared for. Before this annual Bryce Ride started, Christmas was just another day for them. This event assures that their Christmas will be special too.”

Press Information:

- Contact for the day of the ride will be: Kim Hammack, 334-467-2299
- Press will be allowed to accompany the riders and staff to the administrative office only.
- Please check in at the main administrative office (white domed building) and tell security you are there for the Harley Ride presentation.
- Cameras may be used in front of the hospital as the riders approach the facility.
- Bikers and gifts may be photographed.

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